

METHOD FOR PROVIDING PERSONALIZED MEDICAL CARE

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Background of the Invention

1. Field of Invention

10 This invention pertains to the art of methods for medical treatment, and more particularly to treatment limited to members of groups, and more particularly to personalized medical care received at the nation's top hospitals by members of a specific group, and even more particularly to tying this treatment to arrangements for donations to the hospitals.

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2. Description of the Related Art

It is known to provide a network of medical centers to provide personalized access to emergency and routine care twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. For example, The Executive Registry, offered by The University Hospitals of
20 Columbia and Cornell, includes twenty-four hour access to medical care worldwide, global emergency transportation, hospital assistance services including coordination of routine and emergency in-patient admission, out-patient care, second opinion, and follow up care, pre-departure services such as medical consultations, travel inoculations, and compulsory immunizations, physician consultative services for
25 members who are hospitalized in a non-Executive Registry facility, referral to specialists at network hospitals, and relocation health care planning for executives and their families who relocate abroad.

Although The Executive Registry offers some of the same services offered by
30 the present invention, the present invention adds much more, and meets certain needs

not contemplated by The Executive Registry.

Summary of the Invention

- 5 The inventive process described herein is intended to provide premier service to members of an organization. In return, the desire is that these individuals, who in one embodiment of this invention are high net worth individuals, will fund the critical research and development programs going at the various healthcare facilities, thereby providing a desired service, while funding much needed medical research.
- 10 One goal of the process is to provide the top leaders of the world with access to the top hospitals. Over time this bond becomes a win-win situation for both groups. The leaders receive the best available health care and the hospitals develop a relationship with the individual and families who can help fund the needed research and development to improve health care for everyone.
- 15 In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a method for specialized service at an associated healthcare facility, the facility having at least one healthcare provider, includes the steps of choosing the associated healthcare facility based upon at least one quantitative rating system, wherein only the associated
- 20 healthcare facilities in approximately the top 20% of the rating system are chosen, providing a membership provider, the membership provider being a separate entity from the associated healthcare facility, providing at least one membership to at least one potential member, charging a membership fee, providing at least one dedicated staff person, wherein the staff person is at least partially supported by the
- 25 membership provider, offering preferred services to the member, performing at least one medical procedure on the member, conducting at least one satisfaction survey with the member, arranging at least one meeting between at least one satisfied member and at least one officer of the associated healthcare facility, tracking donations given by the at least one satisfied member, and soliciting donations to the
- 30 associated healthcare facility from at least one satisfied member.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the at least one dedicated staff person has at least one dedicated work area, wherein the staff person is dedicated exclusively to the member.

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In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, the cost of the at least one dedicated staff person may be supported exclusively or partially by the membership provider and the dedicated staff person is an employee of the associated healthcare facility.

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In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, the preferred services are chosen from the group comprising: pick up from an airport, pick up from a train station, pick up from a port, pick up via automobile, concierge services, dedicated waiting room, personal accompaniment to appointments, specialized menu options, pre-registration at both the hospital and the hotel, special room assignments, and dedicated examination room.

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In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes arranging initial meeting at the associated healthcare facility.

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In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes informing the associated healthcare facility of donations given by satisfied members.

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In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes maintaining a database of participating healthcare facilities and updating the database.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further

includes preparing at least one gift for the at least one healthcare provider.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes creating multiple access levels, wherein more of the preferred services are
5 offered for the higher access levels, and charging higher membership fees and or donations for the higher access levels.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes soliciting larger donations from members who have had positive
10 experiences and exemplary service.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a method for providing personalized medical care includes choosing at least one hospital considered to be in the top ten overall or in the top ten of a particular specialty, the
15 choice being made using quantitative criteria, providing at least one membership, staffing the hospital with at least one dedicated staff person to assist at least one member in obtaining the personalized medical care, offering preferred services to the at least one member, and soliciting donations for the hospital from at least one satisfied member.

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In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, choosing at least one hospital considered to be in the top ten overall or in the top ten of a particular specialty, the choice being made using quantitative criteria further includes the steps of choosing at least one hospital considered to be in the top ten overall or in the top
25 ten of a particular specialty, the choice being made using quantitative criteria, the choice being made utilizing an electronic database of hospitals, and electronically sorting through the available hospitals to determine the top ten in each category.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further
30 includes providing an electronic feedback form to the at least one member, receiving

the feedback from the at least one member, storing the feedback in a database, and sorting the feedback based upon access level, member, hospital, and service rendered.

5 In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, soliciting donations for the hospital from at least one satisfied member further includes the step of electronically soliciting donations for the hospital from at least one satisfied member based on the feedback.

10 In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes providing electronic identification cards, the cards encoded with a password, the cards containing personal information regarding the member, including personal medical information, the card including the member's access level.

15 In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes allowing the member to choose a specific physician upon arrival at the associated healthcare facility.

20 In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a method for obtaining donation opportunities for at least one healthcare facility, includes the steps of providing a dedicated staff person, offering a membership, offering preferred services to members, obtaining feedback from at least one member with respect to the services provided by the healthcare facility, and soliciting donations from
25 satisfied members.

 In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes setting a standard procedure at each of the at least one healthcare facilities, the procedure dealing with contacting the hospital, transportation to and from the
30 hospital, greeting the member, waiting areas, feedback request forms, donation

request forms, examination rooms, and staffing.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes securing access to a specific group of physicians for the at least one
5 member, upon the member's arrival.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the method further includes creating multiple access levels, wherein more of the preferred services are offered for the higher access levels
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Still other benefits and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art to which it pertains upon a reading and understanding of the following detailed specification.

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Detailed Description of the Invention

There is provided a method for providing personalized, medical care for members of the organization. In this particular embodiment of the invention, the
20 members will be owners, executives, and presidents. However, it is to be understood that this invention is applicable to any group with a defined membership and who have the capability of supporting an individual at a healthcare facility. The people taking advantage of the membership in the present invention are individuals whose time is in short supply, and people who are used to premier facilities and treatment.
25 Because of this, in this particular embodiment of the invention, the membership provider chooses hospitals based upon quantitative criteria, which allows the membership provider to ensure that its members are receiving only the best care. The criteria can be based upon the hospital itself, and the reputation it carries, or a particular specialty within that hospital, or other healthcare facility. For example,
30 U.S. News & World Report® publishes an annual issue dealing with the best

hospitals in America. This provides an excellent source for determining which hospitals to add to the membership package. The particular criteria used to determine which hospitals are best is not important to this invention, and it is to be understood that any method that has quantitative measurements, ensuring top quality,
5 can be used.

In this particular embodiment, only hospitals that place in the top twenty hospitals in the country will be considered for inclusion. Of course it is to be understood that the number twenty is not intended to limit the invention in any
10 manner, and that any number of hospitals, chosen using sound business judgment could be used. Once the method for determining which healthcare facilities meet the qualifications desired by the membership provider, someone from the membership provider contacts the healthcare facility with respect to be a listed hospital in the inventive program. A top decision maker at the healthcare facility is introduced to
15 the inventive program and how it can benefit their facility. If a hospital decides to join the program, that hospital is then added to the database of available hospitals to which the members of the inventive program can go. The hospital would be entered into a database based upon location, ranking, and any specialties. This information will then be used to match members with the care they need or desire.

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Then, in this embodiment, the membership provider chooses a dedicated staff person to operate the membership providers' office located within that hospital. It is to be understood that the dedicated staff person may work part-time for the hospital doing other work, may be a full-time employee of the hospital, etc. Any arrangement
25 can be used, as long as chosen using sound business judgment, that allows access by the members to a staff person at the hospital. This staff person will be trained for the inventive program, along with being made aware of the profile of a typical member. The staff person is preferably an individual familiar with the hospital and the other hospital staff members. The membership provider will train the staff person to
30 accommodate the individuals, how to respond quickly to members, and about the

members. The membership provider will also train the development and financial department at the hospital how best to track members. The hospital will be thoroughly researched and interviewed to determine the particular specialties and amenities available at that hospital. The database will be updated with any relevant
5 information.

Continuing with this embodiment of the invention, the dedicated staff person is supported by the membership provider, although any financial arrangement between the healthcare facility and the membership provider can be utilized, as long
10 as chosen using sound business judgment. For example, the hospital could pay the salary of the dedicated staff person and the membership provider could reimburse the hospital, the membership provider could pay all or a portion of the salary of the staff person, or the hospital and the membership provider could split the cost of the staff person.

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The initial setup, in this embodiment, of the inventive method entails creating a separate system and structure within the healthcare facility that is only accessible by members of the membership provider. As way of example, but not intended to have a limiting effect, 1) a separate office wherein the dedicated staff person is
20 located would be set up at the facility; 2) separate, private waiting rooms; 3) phone lines accessible only by members; 4) separate food and drink menu; 5) transportation to and from the healthcare facility (i.e. limousine ride from the airport, pick up member at their house or hotel, etc.); 6) concierge services; 7) 24-hour pagers; 8) personal digital assistants; and 9) individuals to accompany the member to their
25 appointments. As mentioned above, these amenities are only examples of preferred services offered to members, and are not intended to limit the invention in any manner. Any preferred services can be used and offered.

Along with the preferred services and dedicated staff person, this particular
30 embodiment of the invention includes a list of dedicated physicians who will be

available for medical treatment and/or medical consultation for the members.

Once the hospital is included, and the various staff and services are in place, one example of the process of the inventive method would be as follows. In this
5 embodiment, the members are owners, presidents, or high level executives in companies, or other dignitaries. It is to be understood that the membership type is not intended to limit the invention in any manner. For example, it is possible that a member may sponsor one of their employees. If a member has a particular medical need, or has a medical examination required, the member will either contact the
10 membership provider, or utilize a global computer network to access the membership provider. The member will enter the particular medical problem or need they need addressed, as well as their profile information. This request will then be processed by the membership provider, and the options will be presented for the member to choose.

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Once the member chooses a healthcare facility (it is also possible that the member simply wishes to speak with someone at the membership provider), the member request is forwarded to the dedicated staff person at the particular healthcare facility. The staff person would then contact the member to find out precisely what
20 the member desires and start the process to direct the member to the right area of the healthcare facility. Once the appropriate area has been determined, the staff person will then arrange a time for the member to come in, or to have the member brought in, or for the members information to be sent in for a second opinion. The staff person then pre-registers the member at a hotel, if necessary, and at the hospital. The
25 staff person can also arrange for transportation for the member. The member is met at the hospital and is conducted, in person, everywhere they go in the hospital, if they so desire. The staff person also arranges for medical records transfers and exit interviews after the appointment.

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When the member arrives, the member identifies himself with a membership

card, and the staff person fills out all of the necessary paper work. The member is then directed to the private waiting area, where the preferred services are available. When the time for the appointment or procedure arrives, a dedicated individual, who may be the dedicated staff person, takes the member directly to the medical
5 examination room, or medical procedure room, if the member desires. It is possible to include in this inventive method, separate and private medical examination and procedure rooms as well. The member will then be treated or examined by a healthcare provider. The dedicated individual will then return to bring the member out of the room and make sure that everything met with the member's approval. The
10 dedicated staff person will fill out a report of the visit and submit this information to the membership provider.

The membership provider will provide the member with an evaluation form to ensure that everything was to his liking. The membership provider will process
15 the feedback from the member and enter that information into the database. If appropriate, the membership provider will send a gift to any healthcare provider or staff member who provided exceptional service. Another benefit to the healthcare facility is that the membership provider will arrange for healthcare providers to attend conferences, seminars, and other functions attended by members. This will
20 enable the healthcare facility to have another opportunity to obtain funding and/or advantageous relationships. In return for attending the seminar free of charge, the healthcare provider agrees to meet with the members to answer any medical questions they may have, in private or group consultations.

25 In this particular embodiment, the inventive method has varying degrees of memberships. Different levels of membership (i.e. silver, gold, platinum) would have different associated benefits, and different associated membership fees.

The membership provider may contact any member who responded positively
30 to their experience. The membership provider will then encourage the member to

donate money or other assets to the hospital or the membership provider (if the membership provider is a non-profit organization. If the membership provider is not a non-profit, than the member pays the membership provider a fee.) If the member indicates their willingness to donate money to the healthcare facility, the membership
5 provider will arrange for a meeting between the member and the appropriate personnel at the healthcare facility. In this particular embodiment, the donations solicited from satisfied members is intended to be directed to research and development.

10 The feedback received, and any donations given by satisfied members, can be communicated to the hospital, so that the hospital can be made aware of the benefits of the inventive program.

Example 1

15 The following is a specific example of how one embodiment of the invention could work. John Smith, the chief executive officer of ABC, Inc. has recently determined that he has non-Hodgkin's, B-cell lymphoma. Naturally, he is concerned, and wishes to have the best available treatment. Mr. Smith has been a member of the membership provider for three and one-half years, and holds a
20 platinum membership, with an attendant cost of \$1,000 per year.

Mr. Smith contacts the membership provider and provides the person with the relevant information regarding his diagnosis, medical history, geographic location, etc. Previously that year, the membership provider had added the Cleveland Clinic
25 to its list of healthcare facilities. After reviewing Mr. Smith's file, and his condition, the membership provider offers all options to Mr. Smith. He then decides which healthcare facility he will visit. The membership provider contacts the dedicated staff person, Ms. Jones, at the Cleveland Clinic. Ms. Jones is given the relevant information regarding Mr. Smith, including is diagnosis, his medical history, and his
30 membership information. Ms. Jones then contacts Mr. Smith at his home in Palo

Alto, California. Ms. Jones arranges Mr. Smith's travel plans to Cleveland, including a limousine to pick Mr. Smith up at the airport, and transport him to the Cleveland Clinic. Ms. Jones also pre-registers Mr. Smith at his hotel and at the Cleveland Clinic.

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Mr. Smith arrives in Cleveland, and the limousine takes Mr. Smith to the Cleveland Clinic. Mr. Smith proceeds to the membership provider office and meets Ms. Jones. Ms. Jones checks Mr. Smith into the hospital and directs him to a private room. The room has a television, DVD player, stereo, mini-bar, and an extensive
10 food menu. The room also has a laptop computer and fax machine in case Mr. Smith needs to conduct business. Mr. Smith has chosen to see Dr. Argyle, and Ms. Jones contacts Dr. Argyle to set up the appointment. Dr. Argyle usually has a five-month wait for an appointment. However, by working with Dr. Argyle's schedule, making Mr. Smith's plans flexible, Dr. Argyle agrees to add an appointment (after the
15 appointment, Dr. Argyle is given a gift to thank him for making the special accommodation). In thirty minutes, Dr. Argyle is ready to see Mr. Smith. The examination is conducted in a private room, dedicated solely to for the use of members. Dr. Argyle reviews Mr. Smith's chart, examines him, and sets up a battery of tests that would normally be run the following week. However, due to Ms. Jones
20 relationship with the hospital, she arranges all appointments for the next day. After the appointment, Ms. Jones has Mr. Smith's limousine waiting for him to take him to the hotel. The room arrangements have been made by Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones fills out a report log on Mr. Smith's visit and sends the information
25 to the membership provider. The membership provider processes the information and generates a feedback questionnaire for Mr. Smith. This questionnaire is forwarded to Mr. Smith. Upon his return home, the questionnaire is waiting in his e-mail inbox. Mr. Smith was delighted with his experience and fills out the questionnaire accordingly. Mr. Smith gives particular praise to Ms. Jones. Mr.
30 Smith transmits his completed questionnaire to the membership provider.

The membership provider reviews the feedback and orders a large bouquet of flower to be sent to Ms. Jones for the exceptional job that she did. A bottle of wine is also sent along to Dr. Argyle. If Mr. Smith is pleased with the service he received, 5 the membership provider will contact him three to nine months afterward to ask for a small donation. The membership provider then encourages Mr. Smith to make some type of donation to the Cleveland Clinic. Mr. Smith is more than happy to do this, so the membership provider sets up a videoconference between Mr. Smith and Mr. Henry, the chief financial adviser of the Cleveland Clinic. Mr. Smith and Mr. Henry 10 meet, and Mr. Smith agrees to donate \$5,000 to the Cleveland Clinic to help build a new children's cancer ward. Had this been Mr. Smith's second, third, fourth, etc. visit, the membership provider may approach him for a larger donation.

In one embodiment of this invention, the membership provider contacts the 15 hospital to discuss details of schedules and working with the dedicated staff person who knows the internal workings of the hospital. This enables members to obtain quick appointments with the desired physician. It also enables members to avoid certain doctors and other staff personnel for whatever reason. The staff person, in this embodiment, will create an inventory of personnel, particularly doctors, to 20 determine ones who have provided members with service with which the members have been satisfied.

In this particular embodiment of the invention, the process utilizes computers and the global computer network to facilitate efficiency and rapid response times. 25 The ranking of the hospitals is done via a computer algorithm, and e-mail is used to communicate between the members, the membership provider, and the healthcare facility. However, it is to be understood, that the use of computer technology is not essential to the functionality of the inventive process.

30 In another embodiment of this invention, one of the membership levels could

include use by family members, or includes the ability to bequeath the membership in a will. It is to be understood, however, the particular types of memberships, and the total number of available memberships, are merely embodiments of this invention, and are not intended to limit it in any manner. Any number or type of
5 memberships could be used, as long as chosen using sound business judgment.

In another embodiment of this invention, the membership provider could provide the member with the ability to choose which healthcare facility they wish to visit. A questionnaire could be posted on a global computer network, asking the
10 member specific questions to address their medical needs. The inventive program would analyze the input from the member and list the available healthcare facilities which fit the member's profile. The inventive process could also categorize the facilities by geography, specialty, and ranking. The process could also list the relevance order of the facilities. The process would also allow the member to search
15 through all of the facilities available on the list. The member could then choose one of the facilities and enter their selection. In one embodiment, the process would then ask the member which of the available preferred services they would like to take advantage of, as well as a list of available doctors at that facility. Also in this embodiment, the member's personal medical records, contact information, donation
20 information can be accessed via electronic media through the membership card. This electronic membership card could carry all of the member's information.

The invention has been described with reference to at least one embodiment. Obviously, modifications and alterations will occur to others upon a reading and
25 understanding of this specification. It is intended to include all such modifications and alternations in so far as they come within the scope of the appended claims or the equivalence thereof.